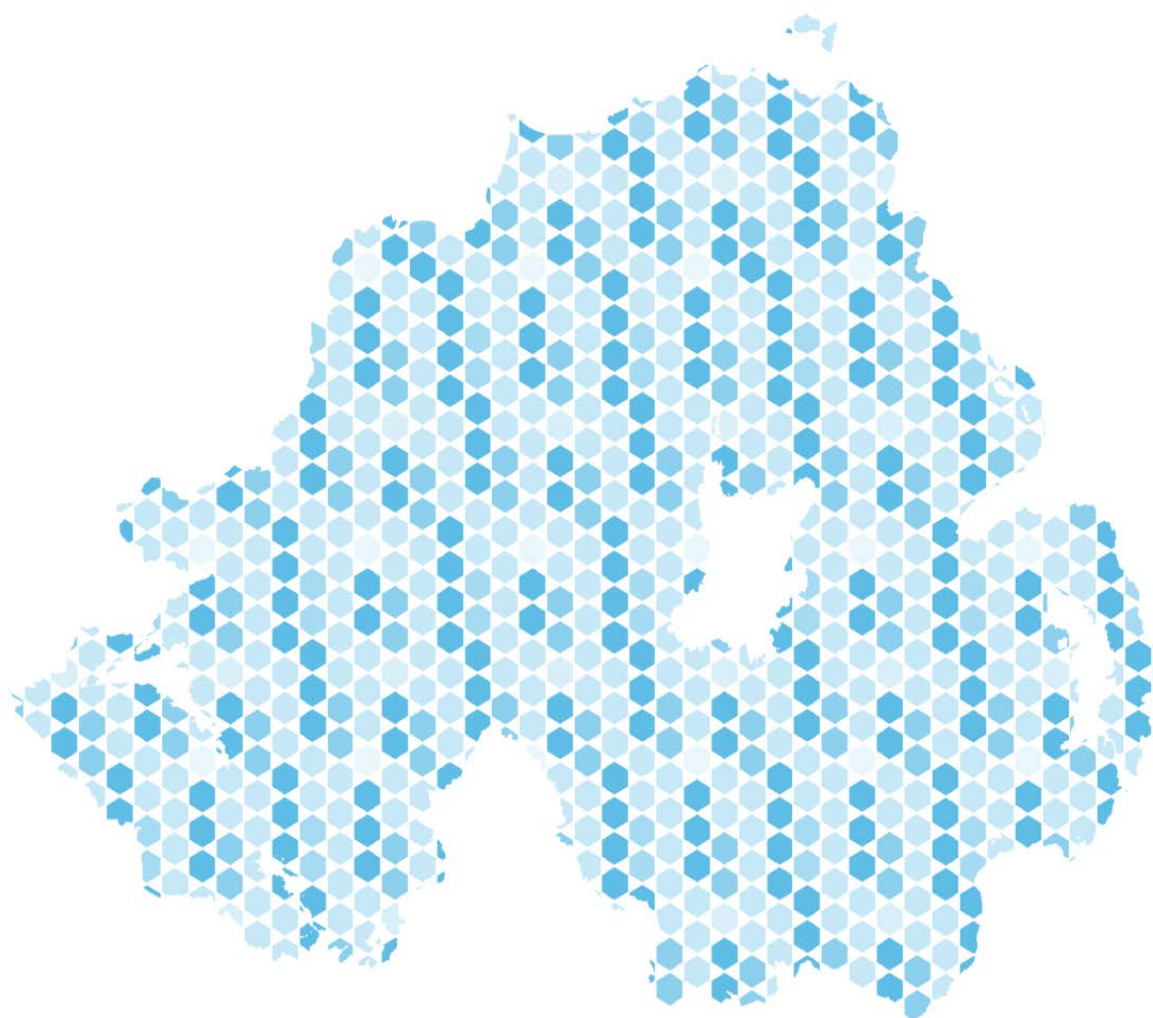


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,  
Saintfield

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2013

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## **SCHOOL CONTEXT**

St Mary's Primary School is situated on the outskirts of the village of Saintfield in County Down. The majority of the children come from the village and the surrounding area. The school's enrolment has fluctuated over the last four years and currently stands at 72, which includes 11 children who are not of statutory school age. Approximately 12% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 35% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

There are three composite classes in the school: one class caters for 28 children and comprises three year groups, including a pre-school reception class; a second class of 30 children comprises three year groups and the remaining class of 13 children comprises two year groups.

At the time of the inspection, two permanent members of staff, including the Principal, were absent.

This inspection completes the work that began in May 2012. The inspection was incomplete at that stage due to industrial action being taken by staff on advice from their teaching union.

## **FOCUS**

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management, including the school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

## **OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION**

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

## **KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION**

### **Achievements and Standards**

**The quality of the children's achievements and standards is good.**

- The children in the school are well-motivated and engage actively and enthusiastically in their lessons.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the children attain good standards in literacy and numeracy. The children express themselves with clarity and increasing fluency; they participate well in class discussion; read with confidence and fluency and can produce writing of a good quality. The school has, appropriately, identified the need to develop further the children's independent writing skills. In mathematics, the children have a sound knowledge of number facts and a good understanding of place value; they are less secure in their

understanding of concepts such as time and data handling and have difficulty applying their mathematics knowledge within real-life contexts. The school has appropriately identified the need to review the whole school programme for mathematics in order to ensure the adequate revisiting of key concepts and the incremental progression in the children's learning.

- Most of the children who have been identified with **special educational needs** (SEN) make good progress in their learning in line with their ability.
- The majority of the children achieve the accepted level of attainment in Information and Communication Technology.

### **Provision for Learning**

**The provision for learning is satisfactory.**

- The quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to good, with the majority being satisfactory. In the good practice, the teaching is well-structured and appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all the children. In the less effective practice, the teaching is over-directed by the teacher and the planned learning activities are not sufficiently challenging to ensure progression in the children's learning, particularly for the more able children.
- The medium and short-term planning is sufficiently detailed to guide the teachers in the day-to-day delivery of their lessons. The teachers have, appropriately, identified the need to review the whole school planning for literacy and numeracy in order to inform better the medium and short term planning and to ensure consistency in the quality of the children's learning experiences throughout the school. The teachers mark the work regularly and in the most effective practice marking is used to promote improvement in the children's learning and to track children's progress and levels of independence. The teachers make appropriate use of the internal data to identify children who are underachieving, to set targets and to provide appropriate intervention programmes for them.
- The teachers and governors need to review the provision for the children in the Reception class to ensure that the programme on offer reflects more fully the pre-school curriculum as outlined in the pre-school curricular guidance; they also need to monitor the extent to which the current arrangements for the enrolment of the reception children impact on the provision for the other children in the class.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is good. The teachers identify appropriately at an early stage, through professional judgement and the analysis of data, children who require support with their learning; they seek advice from a range of educational and medical professionals and use the information gained to implement appropriate support programmes for these children. The teachers need to develop an agreed format for recording the children's individual education plans and to ensure that the plans identify clearly the children's strengths, needs and the strategies to be used to effect improvement in their learning.

- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is very good. This is evidenced through the respectful relationships between the children and all of the adults, through the procedures for consulting with the children; and through the opportunities provided for them to express their views and opinions about aspects of school life. The children's understanding of diversity is promoted and enriched by the effective inclusion of children from a variety of cultures and backgrounds.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for **safeguarding children**. The teachers need to update the current safeguarding policies and procedures to take account of the recent changes in staffing; they also need to include the code of conduct for staff within the Child Protection Policy.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity**, through, for example, the encouragement for the children to have healthy breaks and the extensive whole-school physical education and extra-curricular programmes.

### **Leadership and Management**

**The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.**

- The school has experienced a number of temporary staffing changes over the last year. At the time of the inspection, only two of the four permanent members of staff were present; the Acting-principal had been in post for four months and the literacy co-ordinator had been in post for six weeks. The current staff team are working well together to ensure the continued smooth running of the school and to identify and address appropriate priorities for development.
- The teachers have begun the process of self evaluation to effect improvement through, for example, the collation of internal and external data and through consultation with the parents and children. This process needs to be developed further to include the strategic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching in the school, in order to inform better the school development planning process, to improve the overall quality of the teaching and to raise further the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

### **CONCLUSION**

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

Areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the provision for the children in the Reception class and to monitor the extent to which the current arrangements for the enrolment of the reception children impact on the provision for the other children in the class; and

- develop further the processes for self evaluation, to include the strategic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching, in order to inform better the school development planning process, to improve the overall quality of the teaching and to raise further the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Mary's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 20/03/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-1672** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	16	6	13	5	12
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	63	66	63	58	61
Reception	2	6	3	7	11
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	0	0	0	0	0

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection. For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

The calculations at C and D should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year (expressed as a percentage): 93.8% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 92%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.1 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 24
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 31
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 15 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 66 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 50 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.8%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 35%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 11
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 12.5%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):
- |                |                    |              |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Irish</b> |
| 85.7%          | 100%               | N/A          |

### **THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN**

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection.

Forty-four questionnaires were issued to the parents of the school; 36% were returned to the Inspection Services Branch (ISB) and 13 contained additional written comments. Whilst almost all raised concerns about recent staffing issues in the school, the majority also contained highly positive comments about the life and work of the school including reference to the professionalism and approachability of the current staff and the extra-curricular opportunities offered to the children.

A majority of the teaching and support staff completed the online questionnaire. Almost all of the responses contained additional written comments which highlighted, in particular, the dedication and team work of the current teaching staff.

The inspectors also met with a group of the children from year 6. The children spoke enthusiastically about many aspects of school life including their enjoyment of learning, the kind, supportive teachers and their appreciation of, and participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer to them. They are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.

The concerns that were raised in the questionnaires have been reported to and discussed with the Acting-principal and chair of the Board of Governors.



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